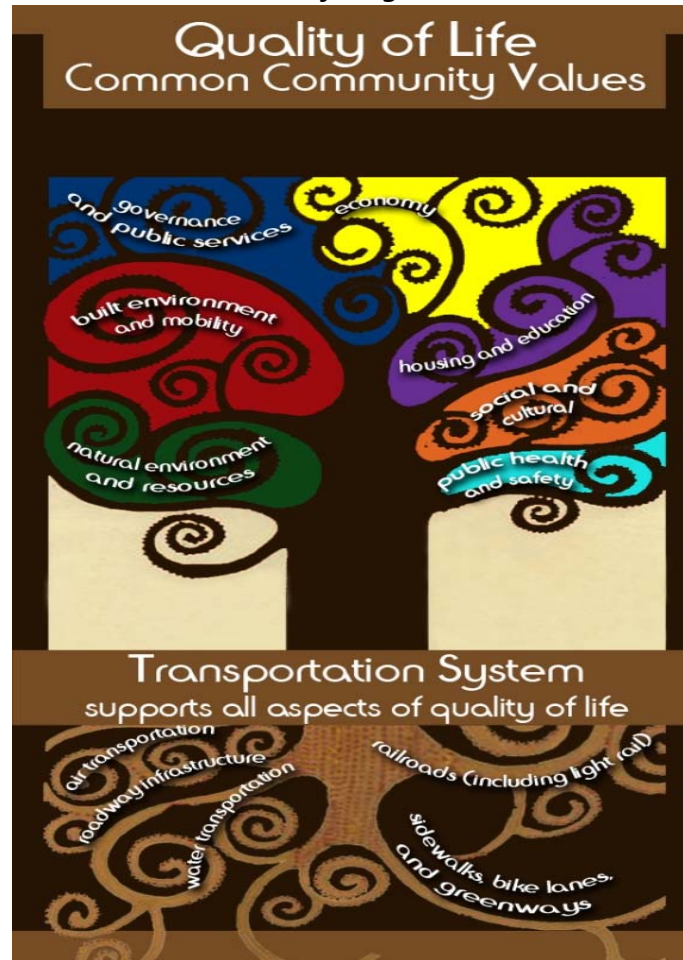


QUALITY OF LIFE – COMMON COMMUNITY VALUES

Context-Defining Questions



ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS IS KEY TO UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT AND EVALUATING PROCESS.

Asking the right questions is essential to achieving the right solutions. The place to begin is with your community's **Quality of Life and Common Community Values**. As you describe your community to those who will change it in some way, it is important to be clear about what matters most to you, what your problems are, and what you are trying to achieve. In many communities, this is clearly stated in an updated comprehensive plan in which everyone has had a voice. The questions below can help you look at all aspects of the community –built environment and mobility, natural environment and resources, economy, housing and education, social and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

GENERAL

- What local/regional plans or policies best communicate the community's quality of life values to the transportation agency?
- What quality of life values are not currently documented in an adopted plan or policy?
- What can the community and/or citizen groups do to work with the transportation agency to address these gaps?

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND MOBILITY

- How would you characterize the general character of the community (urban, suburban, small town, rural)?
- What types of land uses are present (residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural) and where are they located? How is land use regulated?
- Is the public infrastructure capable of supporting the degree of development, both existing and planned?
- Is the community primarily auto-dependent or is it currently multi-modal?
 - Does the community provide infrastructure for non-auto modes (transit, sidewalks, bike paths)?
 - Do the majority of residents have non-auto alternatives to access employment, shopping and recreation opportunities?
 - Does the current development and infrastructure pattern accommodate or encourage walking/bicycling?
 - Does the current development and street pattern encourage and support transit use?
 - Does the community have a Complete Streets policy?
- Is the area currently investing in operational improvements to address accessibility and mobility problems?
- Are there natural or human-made physical features that help to define the community's character or identity?
 - Is the scale of the transportation system in keeping with the character of the communities/sub-communities through which it passes?

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

- Do natural features contribute to the character and aesthetics of the community?
- Is the scale of the transportation system in keeping with the surrounding natural features of the areas through which it passes?
- Are there significant protected natural resources within the planning area?

- Is there a protected or locally valued scenic vista or viewshed in the planning area?

ECONOMY

- Where are the primary employment centers in the area?
 - Where do the potential workers live in relationship to these employment centers?
 - What are the patterns of in-commuting or out-commuting?
 - Are there locations within the study area that are already targeted or good candidates for redevelopment as employment centers?
 - How does the transportation system support or hinder job creation and retention for the area as a whole? For sub-areas?
- Where is commercial activity located and/or desired?
 - What is the character of primary commercial areas (for example, town center, neighborhood commercial, strip commercial, mall/shopping center)?
 - How does the transportation system support or hinder commercial activity for each primary commercial location?
- Is tourism a major factor in the area economy?
 - If yes, why are visitors attracted to the area? Does the transportation system enhance or detract from the attractiveness of these characteristics?

HOUSING AND EDUCATION

- Where are the primary residential locations in the area?
 - How close are these locations to daily commercial services? Can residents walk or bike to these frequently needed commercial services?
 - Do residents of each of these areas have reasonable auto access to appropriate employment centers? Do they have transit or other non-auto access?
- What sub-areas have been identified or targeted for new residential development?
 - Does the transportation system support or hinder provision of a broad range of transportation choices to new residential development?
 - Is the area actively seeking or implementing in-fill development? Are multi-modal options available or planned for these potential in-fill development sites?
- Are there sub-areas where housing prices and/or property tax values are impacted by the location, character or type of transportation infrastructure or services available?

- What percentage of children can walk or bike to school?
- Do transportation agencies have an on-going relationship with school boards or administration staff determining future school sites?
- Are roads and streets adjacent to schools safe for walking and biking?
- Do roads and streets adjacent to schools provide safe access for cars?
- If there are institutions of higher education – colleges/universities, training institutes, etc. – in the area, are there multi-modal travel options available?

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL

- Are there regional or community events, arts, music and/or other cultural opportunities that engage residents and attract visitors to the area?
 - Does the transportation system support or hinder access to these opportunities?
 - Are there multi-modal options available to access these opportunities?
- Are there ethnic, cultural or religious groups with special needs that should be addressed during transportation planning?
- What cultural or historic resources have been identified or listed on local, state or national registers of historic places? Is the scale and type of adjacent transportation in keeping with the character of these resources?
- Does the area have formal or adopted aesthetic guidelines or regulations?

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Are transportation facilities safe and accessible to all residents, including for people with disabilities?
- Are there crime issues associated with any transportation facility or service?
- Is the area designated as a non-attainment area?
- What transportation strategies are in place or could be implemented to improve air quality?
- Is there transit service to hospitals and primary health care facilities in the area?